

REMARKS

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 6, 13, 16-17, 19, 22, 26, 33, and 38 have been amended. No claims have been added or deleted. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1 and 3-39 will remain in the application.

Independent claims 1, 6, 13, 19, 22, 26, 33, and 38 have been amended to incorporate the disclosure of paragraph [0038] of the specification and the concept addressed in claims 2 and 3, for example, whereby the secure data is encoded with different data keys for each user authorization process “such that a combination of user authorization using one of said user authorization processes and any of said several different data keys allows for retrieval and decoding of the same security data” (claim 1). Claims 16 and 17 have been amended to correct antecedent basis. No new matter has been entered by these amendments.

Telephonic Interview with Examiner

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended to Applicant’s undersigned representative during the telephonic interview held on February 21, 2007. During that interview, the Examiner and Applicant’s undersigned representative discussed claim amendments for distinguishing the cited prior art. The Examiner agreed that the claims would distinguish the cited prior art if amended to include the disclosure set forth in paragraph [0038] of the specification specifying that different versions of the same security data are stored for each user authorization process whereby any of the user authorization processes with an appropriate data key (password) allows for retrieval and decoding of the security data.

The above amendments are intended to reflect the changes requested by the Examiner. If the amendments do not reflect the Examiner’s request, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicant’s undersigned representative for prompt clarification.

Section 102(e) and 103(a) Rejections

Claims 1, 3-5, and 22-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Lockhart et al. (US 6,230,272) (“Lockhart”). Claims 6-10, 13-15, 18-21, 26-30, 33-34, and 37-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Lockhart in view of Bjorn (US 6,035,398). Also, claims 11, 12, 16, 17, 31, 32, and 35-36

stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Lockhart and Bjorn further in view of Gressel (US 6,311,272). These rejections are respectfully traversed for the reasons given below.

The claimed method of securing security data, such as, *e.g.* a 128-bit encryption key, stored on a computer system, includes the steps of providing one of several different data keys (*e.g.*, passwords) to the computer system and transforming the security data with one data key in a reversible fashion to produce “encoded secure data.” The encoded secure data is stored such that a user authorization process (*e.g.*, fingerprint validation) may be used in combination with the one data key (password) to provide access to the encoded security data. In accordance with the claimed method, the same security data (*e.g.*, 128-bit encryption key) may be encoded with different data keys (*e.g.*, passwords) to enable different combinations of authorized users and data keys or passwords to permit retrieval and decoding of the same security data. The claimed methods of securing the same security data with biometric data from several different persons and several different data keys to provide multiple login is not taught by the cited prior art.

During the afore-mentioned interview, the Examiner agreed that the claimed invention would distinguish over the “multipurpose data string” of Lockhart if amended to clarify that the same security data is encoded with several different data keys to provide “different encoded secure data for each user authorization process such that a combination of user authorization using one of said user authorization processes and any of said several different data keys allows for retrieval and decoding of the same security data.” Applicant’s undersigned representative understood the Examiner to have agreed during the interview that Lockhart does not teach such a feature and has accordingly amended each of the independent claims.

As previously noted, Lockhart teach that a different data string used to encrypt different private keys, for example, may be used for different software applications for both encrypting the data of the software applications and for authenticating the user. In other words, Lockhart teaches that different passwords may be used to access different software programs used on the same computer. The claimed method instead recites that the “same security data” (*e.g.*, the same encryption key) is encoded with several different data keys (or passwords) to provide several different encoded secure data associated with respective

authorized users whereby different combinations of users and data keys may retrieve and decode the “same security data.” The amendments to the independent claims are believed to make this distinction more clear. Applicant submits that Lockhart’s suggestion of using different data strings for different software applications falls far short of suggesting using different data strings (data keys) in combination with user authorization to retrieve and decode the “same security data.” Put another way, Lockhart do not teach using the same private keys for different software applications and do not teach encoding the same private keys using different data keys (data strings) for multiple logins of different combinations of authenticated users of the same private keys. Inasmuch as this distinction is clearly supported by each of the amended independent claims and not taught by Lockhart, withdrawal of the rejections of independent claims 1, 6, 13, 19, 22, 26, 33, and 38 over Lockhart is respectfully requested.

Given that neither Bjorn nor Gressel provide teachings that address the above-mentioned shortcomings in Lockhart, all claims are believed to be allowable over any proposed combination of the teachings of Lockhart, Bjorn, or Gressel for the same reasons as given above. Withdrawal of all rejections of claims 1 and 3-39 over the teachings of Lockhart, Bjorn and Gressel is thus believed to be proper and is respectfully solicited.

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Conclusion

Amended independent claims 1, 6, 13, 19, 22, 26, 33, and 38 are believed to be novel and nonobvious over the prior art cited by the Examiner. Withdrawal of all rejections and issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully requested. If the Examiner does not find the application to now be in condition for allowance, he is strongly encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative for prompt resolution of any remaining issues.

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